

The entire team deserves recognition for winning the national championship, but I would like to take a moment and recognize a few players whose abilities have garnered extra honors. Seniors Fernando Pessoa and Joe Hillman received first and second team All-American honors, respectively, and sophomore Victor Batista also received second-team honors. Junior Carlos Moreno earned the distinction of being selected the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Player of the Year, the American Volleyball Coaches Association Division I-II National Player of the Year, the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation Tournament Most Valuable Player, and the NCAA Tournament Most Outstanding Player.

Madam Speaker, I again congratulate the BYU Men's Volleyball team on its championship.

Mr. MATHESON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Brigham Young University men's volleyball team on their 2004 NCAA National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship. I am pleased to join my colleagues in cosponsoring this bill and encourage all of my colleagues in the House to support it. The Brigham Young University men's volleyball team made history before they ever set foot onto the court for the 2004 NCAA championship game. The Cougars regular season successes included a new school record of 21 straight victories, a 16–1 home court win-loss record, ten straight weeks on the USA Today/AVCA Coaches Top 15 Poll, and an average fan base of 2,600 at home court appearances.

The Cougars entered the NCAA Final Four as the top seed and the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation regular and season tournament champions. They defeated Lewis University, the defending national champions, during the semi-final match. This win led the Cougars to their fourth appearance in six years in the NCAA championship match, where they overcame a 10–6 deficit in game five to defeat Long Beach State University to win the national championship.

I congratulate the BYU men's volleyball team and Coach Tom Peterson on their championship season and wish them continued success as the build upon these accomplishments in the years to come.

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 643.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4278) to amend the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 to support programs of grants to States to address the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4278

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Improving Access to Assistive Technology for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998.

The Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

"(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the 'Assistive Technology Act of 1998'.

"(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

"Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

"Sec. 2. Findings and purposes.

"Sec. 3. Definitions.

"Sec. 4. Grants to States for purchase of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services.

"Sec. 5. Grants to States for protection and advocacy related to assistive technology.

"Sec. 6. Administrative provisions.

"Sec. 7. National activities.

"Sec. 8. Authorization of appropriations.

"SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

"(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

"(1) Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to—

"(A) live independently;

"(B) enjoy self-determination and make choices;

"(C) benefit from an education;

"(D) pursue meaningful careers; and

"(E) enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society in the United States.

"(2) Technology is one of the primary engines for economic activity, education, and innovation in the Nation, and throughout the world. The commitment of the United States to the development and utilization of technology is one of the main factors underlying the strength and vibrancy of the economy of the United States.

"(3) As technology has come to play an increasingly important role in the lives of all persons in the United States, in the conduct of business, in the functioning of government, in the fostering of communication, in the conduct of commerce, and in the provision of education, its impact upon the lives of individuals with disabilities in the United States has been comparable to its impact upon the remainder of the citizens of the United States. Any development in mainstream technology would have profound implications for individuals with disabilities in the United States.

"(4) Over the last 15 years, the Federal Government has invested in the development of statewide comprehensive systems to help individuals with disabilities gain access to assistive technology devices and services.

This partnership with States provided an important service to individuals with disabilities by strengthening the capacity of each State to assist individuals with disabilities of all ages with their assistive technology needs.

"(5) Substantial progress has been made in the development of assistive technology devices, including adaptations to existing devices that facilitate activities of daily living, that significantly benefit individuals with disabilities of all ages. These devices and adaptations increase the involvement, and reduce expenditures associated with, programs and activities that facilitate communication, ensure independent living and functioning, enable early childhood development, support educational achievement, provide and enhance employment options, and enable full participation in community living and recreation for individuals with disabilities.

"(6) Despite the success of the Federal-State partnership in providing access to assistive technology and services, there is a continued need to provide information about the availability of assistive technology, advances in improving accessibility and functionality of assistive technology, and appropriate methods to secure and utilize assistive technology in order to maximize their independence and participation of individuals with disabilities in society.

"(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

"(1) to support State efforts to improve the provision of assistive technology to individuals with disabilities through comprehensive statewide programs of technology-related assistance, for individuals with disabilities of all ages, that are designed to—

"(A) increase the availability of, funding for, access to, provision of, and training about assistive technology devices and assistive technology services;

"(B) increase the ability of individuals with disabilities of all ages to secure and maintain possession of assistive technology devices as such individuals make the transition between services offered by human service agencies or between settings of daily living (for example, between home and work);

"(C) increase the capacity of public agencies and private entities to provide and pay for assistive technology devices and assistive technology services on a statewide basis for individuals with disabilities of all ages;

"(D) increase the involvement of individuals with disabilities and, if appropriate, their family members, guardians, advocates, and authorized representatives, in decisions related to the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services;

"(E) increase and promote coordination among State agencies, between State and local agencies, among local agencies, and between State and local agencies and private entities (such as managed care providers), that are involved or are eligible to be involved in carrying out activities under this Act;

"(F) increase the awareness and facilitate the change of laws, regulations, policies, practices, procedures, and organizational structures, that facilitate the availability or provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services; and

"(G) increase awareness and knowledge of the benefits of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services among targeted individuals and the general population; and

"(2) to provide States with financial assistance that supports programs designed to